

AdChoices | Start Booming | OPEN

GET STARTED WITH THIS LIMITED TIME OFFER:
50K BONUS POINTS
 WHEN YOU SPEND \$10K. [LEARN MORE](#)

3X ON AIRFARE | 2X ON ADVERTISING, GAS, SHIPPING | 1X ON EVERYTHING ELSE

THE NEW BUSINESS GOLD REWARDS CARD

Subscribe
 Subscriber Services
 Make a Payment
 MyChronRewards



\$250 for \$500 toward a Custom Wavefront LASIK eye procedure

[Click Here to get this deal](#)

New state laws take effect on Thursday

By KELLEY SHANNON, SPECIAL TO THE CHRONICLE
 Updated 12:24 a.m., Monday, August 29, 2011

Houston and Texas

Larger | Smaller 38 tweets 59

Printable Version

Email This retweet Share

Font

AUSTIN - Along with making deep cuts in the state's budget, Texas lawmakers this year passed bills cracking down on drunk drivers and making it more difficult for the government to take private property.

Other new laws ease up on regulations for farmers' market products and allow for catching catfish with one's hands, a technique known as "noodling."

Much of the legislation takes effect on Thursday, the first day of Texas' fiscal year. Then Texans will begin to see how actions at the state Capitol affect their lives in ways large and small.

One new law requires a doctor to attempt to show a woman seeking an abortion a sonogram of the fetus, to describe the image and to provide the sound of the fetal heartbeat before the procedure. Federal Judge [Sam Sparks](#) is expected to rule before Thursday on a challenge to the law by the [Center for Reproductive Rights](#).

"This law is intrusive, patronizing to women and unconstitutional," said [Julie Rikelman](#), the center's lead attorney on the case. She said patients should only be given the information and medical tests appropriate for the circumstances and a doctor should not have to act as a "government agent."

Republican Gov. [Rick Perry](#), who signed the bill into law, believes it will protect unborn life, spokeswoman [Catherine Frazier](#) said.

"It is absolutely crucial that women have all the information at their fingertips when making such a life-changing decision," she said.

Perry also placed eminent domain legislation on his emergency agenda this year.

A law taking effect Thursday puts more safeguards in place for private property owners when the government wants to take their land, said [Bill Peacock](#), vice president for research at the [Texas Public Policy Foundation](#).

The omnibus bill spells out that land only can be taken for "public use" to ensure that property cannot be seized for economic development, Peacock said. It also lays out circumstances in which a landowner can buy back property if it is not used as the government intended.

"It's a step in the right direction," Peacock said, predicting more work on the issue in the 2013 legislative session. "There are still quite a few things we can do in Texas to further protect private property rights."

Parts of the controversial Voter ID law Republicans muscled through also take affect Thursday. Full implementation will begin Jan. 1.

Photo ID

The act will require voters to present a driver's license or another specified form of government-issued photo identification, such as state photo ID, military ID, passport or concealed handgun license, along with a voter registration card to be able to cast a ballot at the polls.

Minority groups complained the measure will unfairly target poorer voters because they are less likely to have photo ID.

THE MUST-HAVE PR MANAGEMENT SOFTWARE
 Manage Your PR Campaigns From One Platform

REQUEST A VOCUS DEMO

VOCUS

LATEST SLIDESHOWS



Photo editor's top pictures



Big 12 football predictions



High school volleyball: Week 3

Latest Houston and Texas Headlines

- Husband, 81, arrested in wife's shooting death
- Woman dies in head-on crash
- Man shot after party
- Fort Bend Parkway link to Loop 610 looks unlikely
- Perry comparisons: Thompson, Clark or Clinton?

LATEST NEWS



Husband, 81, arrested in wife's shooting death

LATEST ENTERTAINMENT

Drag U star, JuJuBee, to school Houston on diva life

LATEST SPORTS



Boys athlete of week: Childress leads Kinkaid

"This went too far in having a very narrow list of documentation," said [Luis Figueroa](#), an attorney with the Mexican American [Legal Defense and Educational Fund](#). He said the state could have made the restrictions less onerous by allowing more forms of identification, such as student identification cards, VA cards or Social Security cards.

The state budget dominated the regular and special sessions, and key to the spending plan was school funding. Legislators cut public education by some \$4 billion over two years, and that reduction is starting to show in cuts by local districts.

Thousands of state employees also are losing their jobs because of cuts. Case in point: [The Texas Parks and Wildlife Commission](#) on Thursday approved a drastically reduced budget for 2012 that reflects a 21.5 percent cut during the coming two years. So far, 111 people have been laid off within the agency.

The disability rights group ADAPT of Texas spoke out this past week against the budget cuts, saying that almost 12,000 disabled and older Texans will have home and community services reduced.

Prosecutors will have new tools to use against drunk driving offenders under a law that doubles the possible prison time to 20 years for intoxication assault when a victim is left in a vegetative state. The legislation also ups the possible jail time to one year for a drunk driver whose blood-alcohol content is .15 percent or higher.

Other criminal justice-related laws will make it harder for prosecutors to convict defendants based on eyewitness testimony alone, make it easier for convicts to obtain DNA evidence to appeal their convictions and prevent young adults from being placed on the state sex offender registry for having a sexual relationship with a teenager.

Farmers and ranchers

One new law will make it easier for farmers and ranchers to get their products to farmers' markets by eliminating some restrictions on how the food must be transported. For example, foods can be kept cold with ice chests or other devices, and farmers will not have to bring along an expensive refrigeration unit and generator, as some local officials have required.

That means more profit opportunities for farmers and more selection for consumers, said [Judith McGeary](#), executive director of the [Farm and Ranch Freedom Alliance](#).

"Consumers have made it very clear," McGeary said. "They want farmers' markets and they want more locally produced foods."

The same piece of legislation eases restrictions on "cottage foods," or baked and canned goods produced in people's homes, such as non-refrigerated cakes and canned jellies. McGeary said the law opens up a business avenue for cottage food providers and does not compromise food safety.

Meanwhile, Texans who want to hunt feral hogs from a helicopter are in luck. Lawmakers passed a bill that lets landowners arrange for the hunting of feral hogs and coyotes from choppers above their property.

Another law makes it legal to fish for catfish with your bare hands, known as noodling.

Reporter [Nolan Hicks](#) contributed to this report.

[Printable Version](#) [Email This](#) [Share](#) **0** **38** [retw eet](#)



Add Your Comment

New to the site?

To use commenting, you need to sign up.

[Sign up](#)

Already a member?

Please [log in](#).

[Forgot Password?](#)

Remember Me

[Log in](#)

Most Popular Comments



native 7:07 PM on August 28, 2011

This article talks about Voter ID like it is a bad thing. Only if you are here illegally.

[REPLY](#)

[\(127\)](#)

[\(45\)](#)

POPULARITY: 82

[Report Abuse](#)

[6 replies](#)

Kali_Ghoulis_ 7:11 PM on August 28, 2011



"Minority groups complained the measure will unfairly target poorer voters because they are less likely to have photo ID"

.....

What's up with minorities not having a photo ID?... geez, in this day and age you have to have a photo ID to do just about anything. Soooo, if they don't have one then they need to go and get one... really not that difficult.

REPLY (106) (27) POPULARITY: 79 [Report Abuse]

16 replies



HeightsDude 7:44 PM on August 28, 2011

Those without proper photo identification know now that they have between now and basically October 2012 to get a photo ID so they can participate in the national election. So between now and then they should have enough time to get a ride to the DPS office or save for the \$2.50 roundtrip fare on Metro to and from the DPS office.

REPLY (80) (15) POPULARITY: 65 [Report Abuse]

9 replies

[View Comments \(82\)](#)

Megan's Law Sex Offenders

Where do Sex Offenders Live in your Neighborhood?

NeighborhoodScan.com

Online Dating Chatrooms

Join now & start chat with local singles.

PuppaDate.com

US Postal Address Change

COA (change of address) form for US Postal. Quick,

www.FastAddressChange.com

Ads by Yahoo!

CHRON.COM

Home
Houston & Texas
Nation & World
Business
Sports
Entertainment
Life
Corrections
Blogs
Weather

City Brights

Traffic
TOPICS
Small Business
MomHouston.com
HoustonBelief.com
29-95.com

NEIGHBORHOODS

Aldine
Alief
Baytown
Bellaire
Clear Lake
Conroe
Cy-Fair
East End
Fort Bend
Heights
Katy

Kingwood

Lake Houston
Magnolia
Memorial
Montrose
Pasadena
Pearland
Spring
Tomball
West U
The
Woodlands

MARKETPLACE

Jobs
Homes
Cars
Coupons
Classifieds
Place a classified ad
Place a retail ad
OTHER EDITIONS
Home Delivery
Mobile
RSS Feeds
e-Edition

LOCAL SERVICES

Air Conditioning Contractors in Houston
Car Dealerships in Houston
Cleaning Services in Houston
Family Doctors in Houston
Furniture Stores in Houston
Injury Attorneys in Houston
New Car Dealer in Houston
Real Estate Agents in Houston
Real Estate Attorneys in Houston
Restaurants in Houston

SERVICES

Help/Contact us
Business directory
Legal notices
Privacy policy
Terms & Conditions
Employment opportunities
Advertise with us
Buy a banner ad